Exemplars of Reading Text Complexity, Quality, and Range & Sample Performance Tasks Related to Core Standards

Selecting Text Exemplars

The following text samples primarily serve to exemplify the level of complexity and quality that the Standards require all students in a given grade band to engage with. Additionally, they are suggestive of the breadth of texts that students should encounter in the text types required by the Standards. The choices should serve as useful guideposts in helping educators select texts of similar complexity, quality, and range for their own classrooms. They expressly do not represent a partial or complete reading list.

The process of text selection was guided by the following criteria:

- Complexity. Appendix A describes in detail a three-part model of measuring text complexity based on qualitative and quantitative indices of inherent text difficulty balanced with educators' professional judgment in matching readers and texts in light of particular tasks. In selecting texts to serve as exemplars, the work group began by soliciting contributions from teachers, educational leaders, and researchers who have experience working with students in the grades for which the texts have been selected. These contributors were asked to recommend texts that they or their colleagues have used successfully with students in a given grade band. The work group made final selections based in part on whether qualitative and quantitative measures indicated that the recommended texts were of sufficient complexity for the grade band. For those types of texts—particularly poetry and multimedia sources—for which these measures are not as well suited, professional judgment necessarily played a greater role in selection.

- Quality. While it is possible to have high-complexity texts of low inherent quality, the work group solicited only texts of recognized value. From the pool of submissions gathered from outside contributors, the work group selected classic or historically significant texts as well as contemporary works of comparable literary merit, cultural significance, and rich content.

- Range. After identifying texts of appropriate complexity and quality, the work group applied other criteria to ensure that the samples presented in each band represented as broad a range of sufficiently complex, high-quality texts as possible. Among the factors considered were initial publication date, authorship, and subject matter.

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For those exemplar texts not in the public domain, we secured permissions and in some cases employed a conservative interpretation of Fair Use, which allows limited, partial use of copyrighted text for a nonprofit educational purpose as long as that purpose does not impair the rights holder's ability to seek a fair return for his or her work. In instances where we could not employ Fair Use and have been unable to secure permission, we have listed a title without providing an excerpt. Thus, some short texts are not excerpted here, as even short passages from them would constitute a substantial portion of the entire work. In addition, illustrations and other graphics in texts are generally not reproduced here. Such visual elements are particularly important in texts for the youngest students and in many informational texts for readers of all ages. (Using the qualitative criteria outlined in Appendix A, the work group considered the importance and complexity of graphical elements when placing texts in bands.)

When excerpts appear, they serve only as stand-ins for the full text. The Standards require that students engage with appropriately complex literary and informational works; such complexity is best found in whole texts rather than passages from such texts.

Please note that these texts are included solely as exemplars in support of the Standards. Any additional use of those texts that are not in the public domain, such as for classroom use or curriculum development, requires independent permission from the rights holders. The texts may not be copied or distributed in any way other than as part of the overall Common Core State Standards Initiative documents.

Sample Performance Tasks

The text exemplars are supplemented by brief performance tasks that further clarify the meaning of the Standards. These sample tasks illustrate specifically the application of the Standards to texts of sufficient complexity, quality, and range. Relevant Reading standards are noted in brackets following each task, and the words in italics in the task reflect the wording of the Reading standard itself. (Individual grade-specific Reading standards are identified by their strand, grade, and number, so that RI.4.3, for example, stands for Reading, Informational Text, grade 4, standard 3.)

How to Read This Document

The materials that follow are divided into text complexity grade bands as defined by the Standards: K–1, 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–CCR. Each band's exemplars are divided into text types matching those required in the Standards for a given grade. K–5 exemplars are separated into stories, poetry, and informational texts (as well as read-aloud texts in kindergarten through grade 3). The 6–CCR exemplars are divided into English language arts (ELA), history/social studies, and science, mathematics, and technical subjects, with the ELA texts further subdivided into stories, drama, poetry, and informational texts. (The history/social studies texts also include some arts-related texts.) Citations introduce each excerpt, and additional citations are included for texts not excerpted in the appendix. Within each grade band and after each text type, sample performance tasks are included for select texts.

Media Texts

Selected excerpts are accompanied by annotated links to related media texts freely available online at the time of the publication of this document.

- Students *analyze how* Abraham Lincoln in his "Second Inaugural Address" *unfolds* his examination of the *ideas* that led to the Civil War, paying particular attention to *the order in which the points are made, how* Lincoln *introduces and develops* his points, *and the connections that are drawn between them*. [RI.9–10.3]

- Students *evaluate* the *argument and specific claims* about the "spirit of liberty" in Learned Hand's "I Am an American Day Address," *assessing the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and the validity of his reasoning*. [RI.9–10.8]

- Students *determine the purpose* and *point of view* in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, "I Have a Dream" speech and *analyze* how King *uses rhetoric to advance* his position. [RI.9–10.6]

Informational Texts: History/Social Studies

Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West.* New York: Holt Rinehart Winston, 1970. (1970)
From Chapter 1: "Their Manners Are Decorous and Praiseworthy"

The decade following establishment of the "permanent Indian frontier" was a bad time for the eastern tribes. The great Cherokee nation had survived more than a hundred years of the white man's wars, diseases, and whiskey, but now it was to be blotted out. Because the Cherokees numbered several thousands, their removal to the West was planned to be in gradual stages, but the discovery of Appalachian gold within their territory brought on a clamor for their immediate wholesale exodus. During the autumn of 1838, General Winfield Scott's soldiers rounded them up and concentrated them into camps. (A few hundred escaped to the Smoky Mountains and many years later where given a small reservation in North Carolina.) From the prison camps they were started westward to Indian Territory. On the long winter trek, one of every four Cherokees died from the cold, hunger, or disease. They called the march their "trail of tears." The Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles also gave up their homelands in the South. In the North, surviving remnants of the Shawnees, Miamis, Ottawas, Hurons, Delawares, and many other once mighty tribes walked or traveled by horseback and wagon beyond the Mississippi, carrying their shabby goods, their rusty farming tools, and bags of seed corn. All of them arrived as refugees, poor relations, in the country of the proud and free Plains Indians.

Scarcely were the refugees settled behind the security of the "permanent Indian frontier" when soldiers began marching westward through Indian country. The white men of the United States—who talked so much of peace but rarely seemed to practice it—were marching to war with the white men who had conquered the Indians of Mexico. When the war with Mexico ended in 1847, the United States took possession of a vast expanse of territory reaching from Texas to California. All of it was west of the "permanent Indian frontier."

Connell, Evan S. *Son of the Morning Star: Custer and the Little Bighorn.* New York: Harper Perennial, 1985. (1984)

Sitting Bull. Sitting Bull.

In English this name sounds a little absurd, and to whites of the nineteenth century is was still more so; they alluded to him as Slightly Recumbent Gentleman Cow.

Exact Translation from the Sioux is impossible, but his name may be better understood if one realizes how plains Indians respected and honored the bull buffalo. Whites considered this animal to be exceptionally stupid. Col. Dodge states without equivocation that the buffalo is the dullest creature of which he has any knowledge. A herd of buffalo would graze complacently while every member was shot down. He himself shot two cows and thirteen calves while the survivors grazed and watched. He and others in his party had to shout and wave their hats to drive the herd away so the dead animals could be butchered.

Indians, however, regarded buffalo as the wisest and most powerful of creatures, nearest to the omnipresent Spirit. Furthermore if one says in English that somebody is sitting it means he is seated, balanced on the haunches; but the Sioux expression has an additional sense, not equivalent to but approximating the English words situate and locate and reside.

Thus from an Indian point of view, the name Sitting Bull signified a wise and powerful being who had taken up residence among them.

As a boy, he was called Slow, Hunkesni, because of his deliberate manner, and it has been alleged that his parents

thought him ordinary, perhaps even a bit slow in the head. Most biographies state that he was known also as Jumping Badger; but Stanley Vestal, after talking to many Indians who knew his, said that none of them nor any member of Sitting Bull's family could remember his being called Jumping Badger. In any event, Slow he was called, and Slow would suffice until he distinguished himself.

Gombrich, E. H. *The Story of Art, 16th Edition*. London: Phaidon, 1995. (1995)
From Chapter 27: "Experimental Art: The First Half of the Twentieth Century"

In one of his letters to a young painter, Cézanne had advised him to look at nature in terms of spheres, cones and cylinders. He presumably meant that he should always keep these basic solid shapes in mind when organizing his pictures. But Picasso and his friends decided to take this advice literally. I suppose that they reasoned somewhat like this: 'We have long given up claiming that we represent things as they appear to our eyes. That was a will-o'-the-wisp which it is useless to pursue. We do not want to fix on the canvas the imaginary impression of a fleeting moment. Let us follow Cézanne's example, and build up the picture of our motifs as solidly and enduringly as we can. Why not be consistent and accept the fact that our real aim is rather to construct something, rather than to copy something? If we think of an object, let us say a violin, it does not appear before the eye of our mind the way it would appear before our bodily eyes. We can, and in fact do, think of its various aspects at the same time. Some of them stand out so clearly that we feel we can touch them and handle them; others are somehow blurred. And this strange medley of images represents more of the "real" violin than any single snapshot or meticulous painting could ever contain.' This, I suppose, was the reasoning which led to such paintings as Picasso's still life of a violin, figure 374. In some respects, it represents a return to what we have called Egyptian principles, in which an object was drawn from the angle from which its characteristic form came out most clearly.

[Figure 374]
Pablo Picasso, Violin and Grapes, 1912
Oil on canvas, 50.6 x 61 cm, 20 x 24 in;
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Mrs. David M. Levy Bequest

Kurlansky, Mark. *Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World*. New York: Walker, 1997. (1997)
From Chapter 1: "The Race to Codlandia"

A medieval fisherman is said to have hauled up a three-foot-long cod, which was common enough at the time. And the fact that the cod could talk was not especially surprising. But what was astonishing was that it spoke an unknown language. It spoke Basque.

This Basque folktale shows not only the Basque attachment to their orphan language, indecipherable to the rest of the world, but also their tie to the Atlantic cod, Gadus morhua, a fish that has never been found in Basque or even Spanish waters.

The Basques are enigmatic. They have lived in what is now the northwest corner of Spain and a nick of the French southwest for longer than history records, and not only is the origin of their language unknown, but also the origin of the people themselves remains a mystery also. According to one theory, these rosy-cheeked, dark-haired, long-nosed people where the original Iberians, driven by invaders to this mountainous corner between the Pyrenees, the Cantabrian Sierra, and the Bay of Biscay. Or they may be indigenous to this area.

They graze sheep on impossibly steep, green slopes of mountains that are thrilling in their rare, rugged beauty. They sing their own songs and write their own literature in their own language, Euskera. Possibly Europe's oldest living language, Euskera is one of only four European languages—along with Estonian, Finnish, and Hungarian—not in the Indo-European family. They also have their own sports, most notably jai alai, and even their own hat, the Basque beret, which is bigger than any other beret.

Haskins, Jim. *Black, Blue and Gray: African Americans in the Civil War*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998. (1998)
From "Introduction: A 'White Man's War?'"

In 1775 the first shots were fired in the war between the thirteen American colonies and Great Britain that ended in a victory for the colonists and the founding of a new nation, the United States of America. Only eighty-five years later, in 1861, the first shots were fired in a different war—a war between the states that became known as the Civil War. It was a war fought between the Confederate States of America and the states that remained in the Union—each side representing a distinct economy, labor system, and philosophy of government. The southern states that formed the Confederacy had agricultural economies that depended on a slave workforce and believed that any rights not granted to the federal government by the United States Constitution belonged to the states. The northern states were undergoing rapid industrialization, which depended on wage labor, and while northerners disagreed among themselves about slavery, most believed it represented a direct challenge to their own rights and freedoms. Most also believed

that a strong federal government, with the ability to legislate behavior in areas not specifically set forth in the Constitution, was key to the growth and strength of the American republic. It was inevitable that these two very distinct societies would clash. For the Confederates, nicknamed Rebels, the Civil War was a new war of Independence. For the Unionists, nicknamed Yankees, it was a war to preserve the Union that had been so dearly won in the American Revolution.

In the eyes of the four and an half million African Americans, enslaved and free, it was a war about slavery; and they wanted to be part of the fight. But many northern whites did not want blacks to serve in the northern military. They called it a "white man's war" and said that slavery was not the main point of the conflict. At first, northern generals actually sent escaped slaves back to their southern masters. Eventually, the Union did accept blacks into its army and navy.

A total of 178,895 black men served in 120 infantry regiments, twelve heavy artillery regiments, ten light artillery batteries, and seven cavalry regiments. Black soldiers constituted twelve percent of the North's fighting forces, and they suffered a disproportionate number of casualties.

Dash, Joan. *The Longitude Prize.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000. (2000)
From Chapter 1: "A Most Terrible Sea"

> At six in the morning I was awaked by a great shock, and a confused noise of the men on deck. I ran up, thinking some ship had run foul of us, for by my own reckoning, and that of every other person in the ship, we were at least thirty-five leagues distant from land; but, before I could reach the quarter-deck, the ship gave a great stroke upon the ground, and the sea broke over her. Just after this I could perceive the land, rocky, rugged and uneven, about two cables' length from us…the masts soon went overboard, carrying some men with them… notwithstanding a most terrible sea, one of the [lifeboats] was launched, and eight of the best men jumped into her; but she had scarcely got to the ship's stern when she was hurled to the bottom, and every soul in her perished. The rest of the boats were soon washed to pieces on the deck. We then made a raft…and waited with resignation for Providence to assist us.
>
> —From an account of the wreck of HMS Litchfield off the coast of North Africa, 1758

The Litchfield came to grief because no one aboard knew where they were. As the narrator tells us, by his own reckoning and that of everyone else they were supposed to be thirty-five leagues, about a hundred miles, from land. The word "reckoning" was short for "dead reckoning"—the system used by ships at sea to keep track of their position, meaning their longitude and latitude. It was an intricate system, a craft, and like every other craft involved the mastery of certain tools, in this case such instruments as compass, hourglass, and quadrant. It was an art as well.

Latitude, the north-south position, had always been the navigator's faithful guide. Even in ancient times, a Greek or Roman sailor could tell how far north of the equator he was by observing the North Star's height above the horizon, or the sun's at noon. This could be done without instruments, trusting in experience and the naked eye, although it is believed that an ancestor of the quadrant called the astrolabe—"star-measurer"—was known to the ancients, and used by them to measure the angular height of the sun or a star above the horizon.

Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans tended to sail along the coasts and were rarely out of sight of land. As later navigators left the safety of the Mediterranean to plunge into the vast Atlantic—far from shore, and from the shorebirds that led them to it—they still had the sun and the North Star. And these enabled them to follow imagined parallel lines of latitude that circle the globe. Following a line of latitude—"sailing the parallel"—kept a ship on a steady east-west course. Christopher Columbus, who sailed the parallel in 1492, held his ships on such a safe course, west and west again, straight on toward Asia. When they came across an island off the coast of what would later be called America, Columbus compelled his crew to sign an affidavit stating that this island was no island but mainland Asia.

Thompson, Wendy. *The Illustrated Book of Great Composers.* London: Anness, 2004. (2004)
From "Composition through the Ages"

Music as a Language Music as a language is the most mysterious of all art forms. People who can easily come to terms with a work of literature or a painting are still often baffled by the process by which a piece of music – appearing in material form as notation – must then be translated back into sound through the medium of a third party – the performer. Unlike a painting, a musical composition cannot be owned (except by its creator); and although a score may be published, like a book, it may remain incomprehensible to the general public until it is performed. Although a piece may be played thousands of times each repetition is entirely individual, and interpretations by different players may vary widely.

Origins of musical notation The earliest musical compositions were circumscribed by the range of the human voice. People from all cultures have always sung, or used primitive instruments to make sounds. Notation, or the writing down of music, developed to enable performers to remember what they had improvised, to preserve what they had

created, and to facilitate interaction between more than one performer. Musical notation, like language, has ancient origins, dating back to the Middle East in the third millennium BC. The ancient Greeks appear to have been the first to try to represent variations of musical pitch through the medium of the alphabet, and successive civilizations all over the world attempted to formulate similar systems of recognizable musical notation.

Neumatic notation The earliest surviving Western European notational system was called "neumatic notation"—a system of symbols which attempted to portray the rise and fall of a melodic line. These date back to the 9th century AD, and were associated with the performance of sacred music particularly plainsong—in monastic institutions. Several early manuscript sources contain sacred texts with accompanying notation, although there was no standard system. The first appearance of staff notation, in which pitch was indicated by noteheads on or between lines with a symbol called a clef at the beginning to fix the pitch of one note, was in the 9th century French treatise Musica enchiriadis. At the same time music for instruments (particularly organ and lute) was beginning to be written down in diagrammatic form known as tablature, which indicated the positions of the player's fingers.

Mann, Charles C. *Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491.* New York: Atheneum, 2009. (2009)
From Chapter 2

If you asked modern scientists to name the world's greatest achievements in genetic engineering, you might be surprised by one of their low-tech answers: maize.

Scientists know that maize, called "corn" in the United States, was created more than 6,000 years ago. Although exactly how this well-know plant was invented is still a mystery, they do know where it was invented—in the narrow "waist" of southern Mexico. This jumble of mountains, beaches, wet tropical forests, and dry plains is the most ecologically diverse part of Mesoamerica. Today it is the home of more than a dozen different Indian groups, but the human history of these hills and valleys stretches far into the past.

From Hunting to Gathering to Farming

About 11,500 years ago a group of Paleoindians was living in caves in what is now the Mexican state of Puebla. These people were hunters, but they did not bring down mastodons and mammoths. Those huge species were already extinct. Now and then they even feasted on giant turtles (which were probably a lot easier to catch than the fast-moving deer and rabbits.)

Over the next 2,000 years, though, game animals grew scarce. Maybe the people of the area had been too successful at hunting. Maybe, as the climate grew slowly hotter and drier, the grasslands where the animals lived shrank, and so the animal populations shrank, as well. Perhaps the situation was a combination of these two reasons. Whatever the explanation, hunters of Puebla and the neighboring state of Oaxaca turned to plants for more of their food.

Informational Texts: Science, Mathematics, and Technical Subjects

Euclid. *Elements*. Translated by Richard Fitzpatrick. Austin: Richard Fitzpatrick, 2005. (300 BCE)
From *Elements*, Book 1

Definitions

1. A point is that of which there is no part.
2. And a line is a length without breadth.
3. And the extremities of a line are points.
4. A straight-line is whatever lies evenly with points upon itself.
5. And a surface is that which has length and breadth alone.
6. And the extremities of a surface are lines.
7. A plane surface is whatever lies evenly with straight-lines upon itself.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency/U.S. Department of Energy. Recommended Levels of Insulation. http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home_sealing.hm_improvement_insulation_table 2010. (2010)

Recommended Levels of Insulation

Insulation level are specified by R-Value. R-Value is a measure of insulation's ability to resist heat traveling through it. The higher the R-Value the better the thermal per

Zone	Add Insulation to Attic		Floor
	Uninsulated Attic	Existing 3–4 Inches of Insulation	
1	R30 to R49	R25 to R30	R13
2	R30 to R60	R25 to R38	R13 to R19
3	R30 to R60	R25 to R38	R19 to R25
4	R38 to R60	R38	R25 to R30
5 to 8	R49 to R60	R38 to R49	R25 to R30

Wall Insulation: Whenever exterior siding is removed on an

Uninsulated wood-frame wall:

- **Drill holes in the sheathing and blow insulation into the empty wall cavity before installing the new siding, and**
- **Zones 3–4: Add R5 insulative wall sheathing beneath the new siding**
- **Zones 5–8: Add R5 to R6 insulative wall sheathing beneath the new siding.**
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Insulated wood-frame wall:

- **For Zones 4 to 8: Add R5 insulative sheathing before installing the new siding.**

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts: History/Social Studies & Science, Mathematics, and Technical Subjects

- Students *compare the* similarities and differences in *point of view* in works by Dee Brown and Evan Connell regarding the Battle of Little Bighorn, analyzing *how* the authors *treat the same* event and *which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts*. [RH.9–10.6]
- Students analyze the role of African American soldiers in the Civil War by *comparing and contrasting primary source* materials against *secondary* syntheses such as Jim Haskins's *Black, Blue and Gray: African Americans in the Civil War*. [RH.9–10.9]
- Students *determine the meaning of words* such as *quadrant, astrolabe, equator*, and *horizon line* in Joan Dash's *The Longitude Prize* as well as *phrases* such as *dead reckoning* and *sailing the parallel* that reflect *social aspects of history*. [RH.9–10.4]
- Students *cite specific textual evidence* from Annie J. Cannon's "Classifying the Stars" *to support* their *analysis of* the scientific importance of the discovery that light is composed of many colors. Students *include* in their *analysis precise details* from the text (such as Cannon's repeated use of the image of the rainbow) to buttress their explanation. [RST.9–10.1].
- Students *determine how* Jearl Walker clarifies the *phenomenon* of acceleration in his essay "Amusement Park Physics," *accurately summarizing* his *conclusions* regarding the physics of roller coasters *and tracing* how *sup-*